

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Asheville Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan is based upon a review of the entire community, an analysis of the existing park system, the identification of user needs, the development of recreation standards, and an adherence to stated recommendations and proposals. The plan is intended to be “action oriented”—designed to provide a framework from which the City can enhance its parks and recreation system through the year 2015.

The Executive Summary outlines the major findings and recommendations of the complete Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan document. It refers to tables, exhibits, and maps within the full report.

Statistics indicate that the City's population will continue to grow moderately, placing additional burden on the existing park system. Meeting the citizens' increased demand for additional recreation programs and facilities seems to be an ever-increasing challenge for the City of Asheville. This is coupled with the fact that many of the existing facilities in the park system have now aged 10-50 years and have outlived their design intent. As these facilities continue to age they will need to be replaced or significantly renovated, modified, and/or expanded. This is an appropriate time for the City to reassess its existing recreation programs and facilities and to formulate a comprehensive master plan which will help address future needs in a proactive manner.

The Asheville Parks and Recreation Department must be proactive instead of reactive in their approach to recreational service. Historically, the Department has met the challenge not only because the community demands it, but also due to the staff's level of professionalism and the importance staff puts on being the best. A well-defined master plan is one part of Asheville's approach to providing recreational service that will address recreation needs for the future.

### **MASTER PLAN PURPOSE**

The main purpose of this document is to provide the City with an accurate and usable plan to guide its actions and decisions concerning:

- Facilities and recreation programming
- Open space, land acquisition, and land management
- Partnerships
- Department organizational structure
- Major maintenance concerns for current and proposed facilities

The Master Plan report is organized into six major components:

1. Review of Demographic and Physical Information
2. Inventory and Analysis of Existing Park and Recreation Facilities
3. Inventory and Analysis of Existing Recreation Programs
4. Recreation Standards and Community Needs Assessment
5. Master Plan Proposals and Recommendations
6. Action Plan Implementation

## DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- The demographic information relating to Asheville has been reviewed to gain an understanding of the unique characteristics of the community and to identify factors that may influence recreation and park planning.
- Understanding characteristics of the population provides a means of customizing recommendations concerning recreation programs and facilities for particular age groups, income levels, gender, or ethnicity. The following information concerning the population of Asheville identifies basic data concerning age, race, ethnic, and gender composition.
- The planning area for this report includes the current City corporation boundary, extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) boundary, and selective areas surrounding the City as determined by the project team with input from the Asheville Planning Department. To better define the planning area for this report, the City is divided into the five planning areas/districts: Central, North, South, East, and West.
- The City of Asheville's population is projected to be approximately 76,100 by the end of the planning period in the year 2015 and will account for approximately 33.7% of the total county population. The population for the planning area is projected to be approximately 109,417 people by the end of the planning period (2015) and will account for 48.4% of the total county population. Population projections for the plan are as follows:

**Table 1-2**

Populations Projections 1990-2015						
Location	1990	1996	2000	2005	2010	2015
Asheville	61,855	68,339	69,900	71,900	74,000	76,100
Buncombe County	174,821	190,852	201,306	209,528	218,227	225,891
Planning Area	96,071	98,202	100,382	103,098	106,155	109,417
<i>Source: 1990 U.S. Census; Office of State Planning, 1995; Asheville Planning Department (city estimates 1996-2015)</i>						

- Like many communities in the United States, Asheville's population will continue to age.
- The population of Asheville is becoming more culturally diverse.
- The ratio of males to females has remained constant since 1970. In 1990 males accounted for 45% of the population and females 55%. Influencing factors such as mortality, longevity, and fertility should ensure this trend continues through the planning period.
- Between 1970 and 1990 the number of households in Asheville increased 34.7% or more than four times the population growth rate. During this period, the number of persons per household dropped from 2.8 to 2.2 in Asheville and 3.0 to 2.4 in Buncombe County. The rate should continue to drop in Buncombe County during the remaining years of the planning period and the City should follow the same trend. (One cause of this trend is the growing number of retirees settling in the area.
- One can expect to see an increase in two-income households and single head of households through the planning period. This overall trend appears to be slowing and will likely stabilize.

- Asheville's average household income rose 45.6% between 1970 and 1990. From 1990 to 2015, average household income is expected to rise similar to the historical rates. However, overall purchasing power will likely decline through the planning period due to escalated costs of living.
- Three large redevelopment projects in the downtown area were completed in the mid-1980s that directly impacted the success of the current economy. These were the Pack Plaza Project, Wall Street Project, and large renovation projects on Haywood Street.
- The overall economic picture in Buncombe County is positive.
- The City and portions of Buncombe County adjacent to the City are becoming increasingly urbanized.
- Asheville has been able to retain its centralized urban core and the historic downtown area retains its role as the City Center.
- It is anticipated that residential development over the next five years will follow much the same pattern as the growth of the past 10 years.
- Industrial and commercial development will continue to be located on the major highway corridors of the area.
- Asheville has six neighborhoods listed with the National Register of Historic Districts. The City has a strong commitment to neighborhood revitalization and historic preservation that will assist with further urbanization.
- Transportation improvements identified for the planning period will ease traffic congestion.
- It is projected that water and sewer improvements will provide an ample capacity through the planning period.
- Soils and topography of the area present major limitations to new development.
- Several major natural areas located in the southeastern United States surround the City (Pisgah National Forest, Blue Ridge Parkway, and Great Smoky National Park).
- Concern with protecting the environment is increasingly important to the general public. There are 16 recorded unique sensitive areas located in the Asheville/Buncombe area. Ten are considered to be of significant value and are recommended for the state registry.

## **INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS OF EXISTING PARK FACILITIES**

- The Department currently operates 54 facilities including over 547 acres of property, 11 recreation centers, 40 parks, 2 swimming pools, 22 tennis courts, and 1 cemetery. In addition, it is responsible for maintaining City Hall and other buildings owned by the City.
- Department staff completed a detailed inventory of the existing recreation facilities in the Asheville study area. The facilities fall under the jurisdiction of the Asheville Parks and Recreation Department (APRD), Buncombe County Recreation Services (BCRS), State of North Carolina (NC), National Park Service (NPS), United States Forest Service (USFS), Asheville City Schools (ACS), Buncombe County School District (BCSD), Asheville Housing Authority (AHA), and non-profit organizations (NP).
- The inventory is prepared by sorting the facilities by geographic location and classification type. Table 2-1 "System-Wide Facility Inventory" is a cross-reference to the review of key facilities.
- Table 2-2 "Key Park Facilities Assessment" provides a rating system of key elements regarding facilities operated by Asheville Parks and Recreation Department. The system

evaluates visual quality, parking, site furnishings, vandalism, accessibility, level of use, and overall conditions. Summary statements for each of the sites are also within the report.

- Most park sites are used extensively and facilities were mostly rated good by evaluating visual quality, parking, furnishings, vandalism, and accessibility. However, facilities such as pools and recreation centers are in need of major upgrades.

## **INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS OF EXISTING RECREATION PROGRAMS**

- A program analysis was conducted on the individual program areas that were selected by Department staff. National trends for each program area were overlaid and a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) was completed for each program area. Visits were made to most of the facilities where these programs exist and staff had input on the program area summaries.
- The Department's program offerings provide a wide range of program services for residents of the area. The program strengths are found in the special events, sports, arts, after school/daycamp activities, nutrition programs, and senior/special population programs.
- The evaluated programs provide the bulk of the core offerings and are well received by the community. The programs evaluated tend to follow traditional program trends of the 1960s and 1970s except in the special events/festivals, daycare/pre-school, and after school/daycamp programs where the Department is clearly ahead of national trends.
- National program trends are identified in the plan for the Department to consider in a management strategy for delivering services. The trends noted are for wellness and fitness programming, earned income opportunities, program standards with measurable outcomes, market plans for facilities and programs, partnership development, core program development, and intergenerational programming of recreation centers.

## **RECREATION STANDARDS AND COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

- The identification of community needs of new recreation programs and park facilities were determined by using five separate assessment techniques:
  1. Project advisory team meetings
  2. Focus group meetings
  3. Community workshop meetings
  4. Review of recreation standards from national, state, and other communities
  5. Citizen surveys
- Six meetings were held with the Master Plan Project Steering Committee (Advisory Team) to review work in progress for the plan. 25-40 members who represent various community viewpoints from throughout the planning area typically attended meetings.
- Sixteen separate meetings to discuss parks and recreation issues with a variety of special interest or "focus" groups were held between October 2, 1997 and October 23, 1997. Each group was asked to identify services, needs, activities, or important issues pertaining to recreational services, programs, and facilities provided by the City.
- In addition to the focus group meetings, community-wide public workshops were held between October 2-23, 1997 and on March 19, 1998. The four October meetings were held at recreation centers throughout the City. The March 1998 meeting was held at the Civic Center. Input statements from the special interest group meetings were displayed at the workshops and participants were given the opportunity to read the statements concerning the various needs of the community. In a democratic fashion, participants were then given

the opportunity to vote on the statements that they supported. In addition to the public workshop input, written statements from Asheville citizens and groups were received and incorporated into the public involvement process.

- Approximately 150 citizens actively participated in the workshops at the recreation centers. Eighty additional citizens attended the meeting at the Asheville Civic Center. Overall, it is estimated that over 10,000 members of organizations were represented throughout the process.
- The following represents a brief summary of the key issues brought forward at the community workshop meetings. A complete summary is provided in Section 4.

#### **Community Workshop Facility Statements**

- Need greenways, bikeways, and safe walks
- Need larger recreation centers for multipurpose use
- Need a sports complex (adult and youth)
- Need larger park sites
- Purchase property for new parks
- Improve and upgrade existing parks

#### **Community Workshop Program Statements**

- Create joint ventures and partnerships
- Coordinate City and County programs
- More senior, teen, and female programs
- Eliminate high cost and low attended programs
- Use centers for social events

#### **Community Workshop Policy Statements**

- Improve existing facilities and commit to maintenance
- Make parks accessible to neighborhoods
- Provide facilities throughout the community
- Keep fees low for kids and seniors
- Don't let the Center City sites get lost in the shuffle

#### **Community Workshop Funding Statements**

- Explore local, state, and federal grants
  - Develop partnerships
  - Pursue bond referendums for facilities
  - Develop ordinance for parkland dedication
  - Setup trust fund for maintenance
  - Host special events for fundraisers
- 
- 480 citizens responded to a public survey performed during January and February 1998. The survey assessed public attitudes and awareness about the Department and identified desired additional services. The survey results validated the information brought forward during the public input process at public workshop meetings and focus-group meetings.
  - Park and recreation standards developed by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), the North Carolina Department of Environment Health and Natural Resources

(NCDEHNR), and master plans for cities of similar size were analyzed to support the development of individual standards for Asheville. Specific circumstances such as varying natural resources, economic conditions, land use availability, cultural preferences, and community needs also contributed to the formation of the standards.

### **Evaluation of Park Types and Land Needs**

- The types of parks that will be needed by the end of the planning period (2015) are based upon the acreage standards provided in Table 4-1 and Table 4-2. They include district parks, community parks, neighborhood parks, mini parks, and special use areas.

### **Land Needs for 2015**

- District Parkland—need approximately 109 acres (1 site)
- Community Parkland—need approximately 189 acres (3 sites)
- Neighborhood Parkland—need approximately 80 acres (6 sites)
- Mini Park/Tot Lots Land—existing acreage is adequate (individual planning districts identify a need for 9 sites)

### **Evaluation of Facility Needs**

- The number of public facilities needed in Asheville through the planning period (1997-2015) are identified in Table 4-4 “Public Recreation Facilities Needs Analysis.”
- Based upon the standards, immediate needs for additional facilities include:

(3) Soccer fields	(19) miles of fitness/jogging
(14) Volleyball courts	(1) Ice skating
(6) Racquetball courts	(2) Amphitheaters
(18) Shuffleboard courts	(2) Recreation centers w/o gyms
(11) Horseshoe pits/areas	(1) Swimming pools
(469) Picnic tables	(3) Golf courses
(21) Picnic shelters	(44) miles of bike trails/routes
(46) Playgrounds	
- Through the year 2015, the facility needs increase to the following totals:

(5) Soccer fields	(22) miles of fitness/jogging
(16) Volleyball courts	(1) Ice-skating
(7) Racquetball courts	(2) Amphitheaters
(20) Shuffleboard courts	(3) Recreation centers w/o gyms
(13) Horseshoe pits/areas	(1) Swimming pools
(559) Picnic tables	(3) Golf courses
(25) Picnic shelters	(48) miles of bike trails/routes
(46) Playgrounds	

## **MASTER PLAN PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The Asheville Parks and Recreation Department (APRD) is recognized nationally and throughout the southeast region as having a highly motivated and professional staff, which provides quality recreational services for the community. In part, the professionalism of the staff has enabled the Department to overcome most of the challenges confronting it.
- Recently the problems that have been most difficult for the Department to resolve have been primarily in the area of recreation facility deficiencies. Basically, APRD has been blessed with quality programs and people, but the facilities are lacking due to age and

outdated design. As these facilities continue to age they will need to be replaced or significantly renovated, modified, and/or expanded.

- The most daunting challenge the Department faces during the planning period is providing new or additional recreation facilities and improving existing recreation facilities.
- Asheville citizens are accustomed to having APRD provide diverse recreational activities and will expect the same in the future. Public input brought forward during the planning process suggests that the citizens' interest and demand for quality leisure services will only increase as time passes. Additionally, the citizens expect local government to be a main provider of recreation services that must be priced to accommodate as many people as possible. An important aspect of recreation activities is to accommodate people who are economically disadvantaged. The APRD strives to provide for everyone in the community.
- In order to present a realistic plan to meet the recreational needs of the future, master plan scenarios were developed "in-house" by the Consultant as part of the overall planning process. Each scenario was evaluated as to how well it addressed the recreational needs of the community. Preliminary recommendations were presented and reviewed with Department staff and the Advisory Team on December 15, 1997 for the purpose of refining them for the final document.

### **Roles of Providers**

- Meeting all the recreational needs of the community will require a joint effort between the various government agencies and the private sector.
- The federal government is primarily charged with the protection, preservation, conservation, and management of public lands that are deemed appropriate and necessary for all the United States. The U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Interior all manage lands in western North Carolina that are used for recreational activities. The federal government will continue to provide facilities and, for the most part, will continue to be a major provider of regional type national facilities.
- The state of North Carolina should continue to offer a variety of recreational facilities and programs on a multi-county regional basis typically associated with regional parks.
- The state of North Carolina should take the lead responsibility of coordinating and planning the Mountains to Sea Trail that is planned to cross the state and connect to Mt. Mitchell State Park located northeast of Asheville.
- The state of North Carolina should financially assist Asheville with acquiring land for parks, developing new parks, and renovating existing parks through the North Carolina PARTF grant program or any other state grant programs.
- By the year 2015, it is forecasted that there will be 225,891 people living in Buncombe County, which will create a strong need for additional recreation services and park facilities. Buncombe County Recreation Services (BCRS) has recently completed a Capital Project Plan for its Department that summarizes future renovation, expansion, and new park development projects. It is recommended from this Master Plan that the County also begin planning for a district park to serve the surrounding northwest Asheville area. The primary role of the County is to provide facilities and programs on a countywide basis.
- The agency currently manages and operates 27 separate facilities for use by all county residents. BCRS provides facilities such as athletic fields, golf courses, nature centers, pools, recreation centers, and river access points. Additionally, the County does provide recreational opportunities at 14 school sites in the planning area.
- It is imperative that there be strong coordination and cooperation between the County and City in the delivery of recreation services and facilities. This Master Plan should be

presented to the County immediately after adoption to identify potential coordinated efforts for joint programming and sharing of facilities.

- If it is recognized in the early time frames of this Master Plan that the County and the City are not able to achieve their individual goals or there is extensive duplication of efforts, then both governmental bodies should consider a joint County-City Parks and Recreation Department.
- As its primary focus, Asheville needs to offer recreation programs and park facilities for its own citizens. Historically, the City has been serving both Asheville residents and those living in Buncombe County. It is anticipated that the City will not be in a financial position to offer recreation programs and park facilities for a large population of citizens living in the county unless partnerships and alliances are created.
- The Master Plan is based on the premise that the Asheville Parks and Recreation system will be structured to primarily serve approximately 109,417 people who are anticipated to live within the City or its sphere of influence (extraterritorial planning area) by the year 2015. The proposed facilities will not be able to accommodate the entire County, except for those offered at special use parks and programs through partnering agreements and alliances.
- Asheville Parks and Recreation Department should continue to offer a variety of recreational activities that meet the diverse needs of the area. The City should also continue providing community, neighborhood, mini parks, special-use parks, and open space.
- The extent of program and facility offerings will ultimately be determined by what Asheville can afford. The City should search for teaming opportunities with other governmental agencies and the private sector in sharing of programs and facility development.
- Similar to Asheville, the other cities and towns in Buncombe County will need to assist in offering recreational programs and facilities for their own communities.
- The local school systems have cooperated in making school property available for recreational use where possible. The schools and the Department should work more closely together in identifying additional programs that may take place on school or park properties. Additionally, a formal joint use agreement should be attained to identify responsibilities and resources to support a common purpose. The schools and APRD should be planning jointly on how to provide new sites and renovate or improve existing sites to meet both their needs.
- Through the years quasi-public organizations such as churches, civic clubs, and community organizations in Asheville have provided or supported vital recreational activities in the community. It will be important through the year 2015 for the quasi-public sector to maintain its strong supporting role in providing facilities and programs.
- Large corporations such as Mission/St. Joseph's Heath Systems, Ingles Markets, Beacon Manufacturing, BASF, Bell South, and Carolina Power can play a vital role in assisting the City with providing leisure services.
- In the future, Asheville will need to target private industries in helping to mutually develop new recreation facilities.
- Developers need to assist the City and County by the dedication or reservation of future park sites as part of the overall land development process. Also, developers could provide payments in lieu of dedication when the property does not fit the master plan for recreation or greenway development.

#### **Park Proposals and Recommendations**

- It is recommended by the year 2015 that Asheville make provisions for the following new park facilities: (3) community parks, (6) neighborhood parks, (9) mini parks, (4) renovated and expanded existing recreation centers, (2) large recreation centers, (2) special use



athletic/sports parks, and (1) indoor swimming facility. Greenway recommendations within the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Are limited to identifying possible greenway corridors for use in an independent plan being developed by the Asheville Planning Department. The proposals and recommendations are graphically shown on Exhibit 5-8 “Master Plan Proposals” and on individual maps for each park/facility category (Exhibits 5-1 to 5-7). Table 5-1 “Park Facility Classification” lists the classification for each existing park site in the system.

- The sites have been located to best serve the entire planning area. Regardless of the sites identified in the plan, the City should be prepared to adjust and adapt locations based on market conditions and availability of land. In order to be cost efficient the Department must be able to act quickly to secure land as soon as it becomes available. This may require that parks or facilities be placed in different locations than originally proposed. The Department will then have to analyze the overall suitability of the new site or facility to determine if its development capabilities or use can overcome its location.
- Additionally, the Department must also analyze how a new facility will affect the need for existing facilities. The worst case scenario is for the Department to be forced to close, sell, or otherwise dispose of existing sites in order to provide better service and facilities. Development of a land trust would help these efforts.

### **Regional Parks**

- There are four regional parks within a 50-mile radius of Asheville. These facilities include the Blue Ridge Parkway, Mt. Mitchell State Park, North Carolina Arboretum, and Pisgah National Forest. These facilities provide the Asheville planning area with the necessary amount of regional parkland throughout the planning period and no future regional parks are proposed by this plan.

### **District Parks**

- The existing District Park facilities provided by Buncombe County will require improvements and renovation to keep pace with changing needs and to accommodate more users. Improvements to existing district parks have already been identified by the County and are included in their Capital Project Plan.
- The new recommended District Park should serve the northwest portion of the study area. Buncombe County should take the lead in developing this facility, but the City of Asheville may also find it beneficial to partner with the County.

### **Community Parks**

- The existing community parks within the Asheville system are providing service by using small compact sites. Most of the parks are less than 20 acres in size, which limits the ability to include multiple facilities found typically at new community parks.
- The small sites are difficult to program and maintain because of the high level of use received and the limited space allowed for multi-purpose activities. The existing eight community parks (5 provided by APRD, 2 by the County and 1 by APRD with the school system) identified in the plan will require improvements and renovations to accommodate future use and allow for expanded facility needs.
- Improvements to existing community parks may include the following list of items:  
—Acquire adjacent property where available to increase facility offerings and/or secure perimeter buffers such as at Aston and Shiloh.

- Add more picnic and seating spaces (shelters, tables, and benches).
- Add and improve play areas.
- Develop more active recreation facilities at Livingston Park.
- Add and improve parking areas.
- Improve signage and landscaping.
- Add sports fields, game fields, or courts if possible to increase revenues.
- Install or improve items such walkways, drinking fountains, and restrooms.
- Improve disabled accessibility within the parks.
- Reuse under utilized tennis court sites for other recreation opportunities such as basketball, skateboarding, and in-line skating.
- Consider designated space within the parks for use by pets (dog park area).
- Community parks will most likely house a majority of the active facilities such as sports fields and courts.
- The City must develop larger sites that allow for multi-purpose activities. New parks should typically be 40 to 75 acres (minimum 15 acres) to provide for multi-purpose use.
- The Master Plan calls for the development of 3 new community parks for the system. All the proposed and existing community park sites are identified on Exhibit 5-3 “Community Park Map.” The sites have been located to best serve the entire planning area.
  - North Planning District Community Park (NC-1)** (near the French Broad River and former Woodfin landfill site)—The proposed park is located north of Asheville near the French Broad River in the general area of Riverside Drive.
  - East Planning District Community Park (EC-1)** (Lake Craig area)—The proposed location for the park is near Recreation Park, north of I-40.
  - West Planning District Community Park (WC-1)** (Erwin Hills area)—This park is intended to serve the West Asheville area. The park is located in the Erwin Hills area just north of New Leicester Highway. The site may also be a possible alternative location for a large recreation center (mega-center) to serve this part of the City.
- Regardless of the suggested improvements, site master plan updates should be prepared for any major park improvement or renovation and the public should be involved with the development process.

### **Neighborhood Parks**

- Existing sites need renovations and improvements to accommodate individual facilities and improve service. Improvements to existing neighborhood parks may include the following:
  - Renovate and improve play equipment areas to current standards (i.e. fall-zone material, accessibility, remove wood structures, etc.).
  - Acquire adjacent property for improving facility offerings and/or perimeter buffers.
  - Add more picnic and seating spaces.
  - Improve restroom accessibility at sites that offer facilities.
  - Improve parking areas where offered and provide disabled access to facilities.
  - Improve signage and landscaping.
  - Site sports fields or courts to be sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood and eliminate conflicts with other park activities.
  - Install, improve, or renovate items such as walkways, drinking fountains, and picnic shelters.

- Improve overall disabled accessibility within parks.
- Link parks to local walkways and, where feasible, connect to greenways and trails.
- Reuse underutilized tennis courts or multi-purpose courts for other recreation opportunities such as basketball, skateboarding, or in-line skating.
- Develop 6 new neighborhood parks. The following list identifies the general locations of all the proposed neighborhood park sites. Sites are further described in Section 5. (Note: No parks have been proposed for the Central Planning District due to existing neighborhood parks serving the area adequately throughout the planning period.)
  - North Planning District** Develop 2 sites. (Beaver Dam and Merrimon/Elkmont areas)
  - $\frac{3}{4}$ **South Planning District** Develop 2 sites.(Royal Pines and Dingle Creak areas)
  - $\frac{3}{4}$ **East Planning District** Develop 1 site.(Haw Creek)
  - $\frac{3}{4}$ **West Planning District** Develop 1 site.(Starnes Cove area)

### **Mini Parks**

- Existing sites need renovations and improvements to accommodate new equipment and facilities. Improvements to existing mini parks include the following:
  - Renovate and improve play equipment areas to current standards (i.e. fall-zone material, accessibility, remove wood structures, etc.).
  - Acquire adjacent property to improve facility offerings and/or perimeter buffers.
  - Add more picnic and seating spaces.
  - Improve restroom accessibility at sites that offer facilities.
  - Improve signage and landscaping.
  - Install, improve, or renovate items such as walkways, drinking fountains, and picnic shelters.
  - Improve overall disabled accessibility within parks.
  - Link parks to neighborhood walkways and, where feasible, to proposed greenways/trails.
- Develop 9 new sites. Where possible, existing City-owned property should be used to develop these parks. Joint use of sites with other City departments (library, fire/police, transit, health services, etc.) is highly encouraged to save on development cost. (Parks have only been proposed for the North, South, East, and West planning districts because these areas were deficient of mini parks sites.)
  - North Planning District**—Two parks should be located in the district and within a needed neighborhood at an existing natural area or open space site.
  - South Planning District**—Four parks should be located within existing populated areas by either the City or County as needed or requested by local residents.
  - East Planning District**—One park should be located within existing populated areas by either the City or County as needed or requested by local residents.
  - West Planning District**—Two parks should be located within an existing populated area as needed or requested by local residents.

### **Existing Special Use Parks/Facilities Parks**

- Existing sites need renovations and improvements to accommodate new equipment and facilities. The following recommendations are for existing sites and are intended to improve their use through the planning period.
  - French Broad River Park** is the newest park in the system and the first in a series of river parks along the French Broad River. The 14-acre site needs to follow the master plan that has been developed for it. Planned improvements include additional paved trails,

picnic tables, benches, and landscaping. The park is planned to be a special river park with boat access and a possible band shell.

—**Amboy Road River Park** is also within the series of river parks proposed along the French Broad River. It will serve as a connector park to the French Broad River and Hominy Valley River Parks. The park will feature a boat launch, parking, fishing, picnic tables, benches, paved trails, wetland boardwalk, interpretive signage, and landscape improvements.

—**Richmond Hill** is to become a 181.5-acre regional special use facility featuring a golf course, youth baseball fields, youth soccer fields, football fields, parking, restroom facility, playground, benches, and landscape improvements.

—**APRD Maintenance Facility** needs additional space for equipment repairs and storage of materials. The site will also need to be better screened from the surrounding neighborhood and park.

—**Thomas Wolfe Plaza** improvements to this facility are primarily for maintaining its current design and keeping it a source of open space in the downtown area.

—**Memorial Stadium** is in good overall condition however, the site does receive considerable vandalism due to its moderate use. The site also needs improved handicap/disabled accessibility.

—**City/County Plaza** The overall condition and visual quality of this facility needs to be maintained to provide a proper image for the City and County. A better stage/amphitheater is needed for events held during the summer.

—**Riverside Cemetery** has space remaining for 250 more interments. The cemetery is a popular location for walking. Handicap accessibility is inadequate and needs improving and maintenance will need to continue on the site furnishing such as steps, walls seating, fence, roads, historic markers, and landscaping.

—**Pack Square** is a familiar Asheville landmark since the early 1900s. The facility is well maintained and needs improvements such as fountain renovations and replacement or repair of brick and concrete-paver walkways.

—**Pritchard Park** is deteriorated and unattractive and is planned for renovation as a downtown open space area once Asheville Transit moves to a new transfer station. A separate master plan will be prepared identifying all the site improvements.

#### **Proposed Special Parks or Facilities**

- The following recommendations for proposed parks or special facilities are intended to increase and improve use through the planning period.

—**Athletic Complex/Facility**—There was strong interest voiced during the community-input meetings for additional youth and adult sports fields (baseball, softball, and soccer) primarily to provide practice space. It is recommended that 8-10 baseball/softball fields and 8-10 soccer/football fields be placed throughout the planning area by 2015. The development of a proposed sports facility for youth athletics at the Richmond Hill property will help provide facilities for youth baseball. Another athletic facility should be sited at a one of the proposed community park sites or the Mills River property.

—**Large Recreation Centers (Mega Center)**—Two large regional recreation centers are recommended to accommodate year-round activities similar to what is found at private facilities or a YMCA. One of the centers could contain an indoor swimming pool at some time during the planning period. This type of center typically has weight/exercise rooms, instruction rooms, a running track, a gymnasium, etc. Generally, the facilities could be located as a stand-alone facility or it could be incorporated into a community park. The proposed center sites are shown on Exhibit 5-6 “Recreation Centers Map.” (See individual facility recommendations-Recreation Centers)

—**Swimming Facilities**—The public stated that there is a desire for more indoor facilities that will accommodate recreational swimming, competitive swimming, and instructional classes for swimming and exercise. The existing outdoor facilities will likely become a major maintenance problem due to their age and will eventually need to be replaced. Public outcry for more indoor swimming facility warrants a recommendation of a single large citywide facility possibly as part of a large recreation center (mega center). The City also has an opportunity to be involved with developing an indoor pool as part of a public-private venture at Asheville High School. (See individual facility recommendations-Swimming Pools)

### **Greenways/Trails**

- This Master Plan identifies the need for approximately 19-22 miles of fitness and walking/jogging trails for service through the planning period. Exhibit 5-7 “Greenway/Trails Map” identifies proposed greenway corridors that will need to be coordinated with the citywide Greenways Master Plan being overseen by the Asheville Planning Department.
- The Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan does not make any recommendations beyond identifying possible corridors for greenway development. The independent Greenways Master Plan, being preformed by the Asheville Planning Department, will identify greenway needs and development as brought forward in their planning process.
- Most likely, the Greenways Master Plan will recommend developing more than 19-22 miles of trails and it will also recommend different types of greenways for particular areas of the city.
- The Department should consider the following basic recommendations concerning greenway with parks:
  - Acquire adjacent property at existing parks for greenway access, where possible.
  - Develop greenway corridors to link parks together, provide access to natural resources, and provide safe easy access to other use areas such as schools or public facilities.

### **Natural Areas and Open Space**

- The City should continue to acquire natural areas to fortify its existing holdings. The ability of the City to acquire these properties could be enforced by amending the Asheville Development Ordinance to incorporate the acceptance of open space compatible with the recommendations of this study. Additionally, the City should try to acquire properties adjacent to existing parks to increase buffers and possibly expand use.
- The City owns, controls, or has access to over 5,000 acres of land throughout the planning area associated with watershed protection areas. Sites such as Bee Tree Lake east of Asheville could be developed for recreational purposes.
- Another potential site for partnership development and securing open space lies in the southern part of the county at the Mills River property. This site could be developed with neighboring Henderson County and Buncombe County to provide additional open space and possible active recreation facilities on a regional basis.

### **Individual Facility Proposals and Recommendations**

- Baseball/softball fields—(8-10 fields needed) Sites should be located at proposed community parks and at a proposed athletic complex(s).
- Youth soccer fields—(8-10 fields needed) Sites should be added at a special facility/athletic field complex and/or community parks.

- Volleyball courts—(34 courts needed) These can be provided at community, neighborhood, or special use parks.
- Large picnic pavilion/shelter—(1 needed) It should be added at a community park.
- Large group picnic shelters—(25 needed) should be added at all new community park sites and special facilities.
- Playground activities—(46 playgrounds needed) They should be provided throughout the park system and with schools where possible.
- Swimming—existing sites need to be renovated (Walton Street and Malvern Hills) and the City needs to provide an indoor pool facility, likely at a proposed mega-center. The City also has an opportunity to be involved with developing an indoor pool as part of a public-private venture at Asheville High School.
- Community recreation centers—Renovate and expand four existing centers (Reid, Montford, Shiloh, Stephens-Lee). The remaining existing centers should be used for community centers to serve a specific demographic or program.
- Golf Course—A golf course is recommended for the Richmond Hill site. To reduce cost within the master plan this facility should be jointly developed through a public/private partnership agreement.

## **Overall Program Considerations**

### **Immediate Program Considerations**

The following listed items are included for implementation over the next five years. This list is a combination of program, policy, procedural, and funding recommendations provided in a strategic order, not necessarily in a priority order of importance. Many of these can be implemented simultaneously because they are not dependent on each other. This list should not be interpreted as an order or definitive steps to implementing programmatic changes.

- Expand the hours of operation at each recreation center to encompass the hours customers can participate and enhance capacity.
- Create a set core of programs at each facility based on population demographic needs.
- Individual Program Area Recommendations can be implemented simultaneously.
- Track the lifecycle of all programs to determine how to build capacity in the program or not offer those programs in a down cycle.
- Create facility standards in each recreation center for cleanliness, signage, equipment levels, and room capacity levels.
- Develop consistent pricing strategies for all program service areas that evaluate the benefits received against an established tax subsidy level, and willingness to pay level.
- Create written partnership agreements with key partners that provide services with the City. These agreements need to focus on a common vision and equal levels of contributed resources. This would also include special events held in the City by others.
- Use performance measures to track program success. Measures include revenues to expense expectations, customer satisfaction levels, capacity use of facilities, standard levels met, user return rates, and programs offered versus those that actually take place.
- Create program specific and site-specific market plans to maximize resource utilization.
- Create an activity based costing model for each facility and program area to determine true cost for each service provided.
- Develop a computerized registration system that is accessible at multiple locations. This will allow programs to be more customer friendly and meet citizen needs.

- Complete an inventory of all equipment in the recreation centers and identify what is no longer in use, outdated, or broken. Replace the equipment to enhance program services.
- Change the image of recreation centers by improving their color schemes, signage, outside decor, lighting, and landscaping.
- Incorporate more sponsorship opportunities into all recreation programs.

### **Individual Program Recommendations**

The individual program areas were selected by the Asheville Parks and Recreation staff and reviewed by the Consultant. All the information available for each program area was evaluated, facilities were visited, national trends were overlaid, and recommendations for each program area were determined. Individual recommendations have been made for over 20 individual program areas to improve program creativity, expand use, and increase revenues. The individual program recommendations are listed within Section 5 of the Master Plan.

### **Funding Proposals and Recommendations**

- Use activity-based costing model for recreation programs and park maintenance to identify activities that can be contracted at a lower cost and to make better decisions concerning fees and charges.
- Perform cost benefit analysis to improve revenue enhancement and support development of facilities and programs.
- Create a full revenue plan for the Department that focuses on maximizing funding strategies.
- Track cost per experience.
- Price activities based on the level of benefits received and a structured revenue plan that includes a set strategy for subsidized services.
- Benchmark prices against other providers.
- Increase partnerships and/or sponsorships as part of a revenue plan.

### **Policy and Procedural Proposals and Recommendations**

- Change policies concerning hours of operation.
- Reorganize the recreation division structure to consolidate programming functions into demographic groups. This will help maximize available staff resources such as time, money, and equipment. This will encourage staff to think more holistically.
- Develop policies and procedures on managing future partnerships and sponsorships.
- Provide customer friendly registration procedures.
- Establish procedures to implement marketing plans for each recreation site.
- Establish a marketing strategy for the Department to highlight FABs (Features, Advantages, and Benefits).
- Make program-pricing policies consistent.
- Establish procedures for “benchmarking” performance standards.

### **Maintenance and Recommendations**

- Maintenance personnel must perform tasks citywide for various departments. The level of care and/or time dedicated for “true park maintenance” is many times subjected to priority constraints from outside influences. Based on maintenance levels observed at the parks, it appears maintenance staff resources are spread too thin because of dual roles.
- The Department needs to step-up their level of care at parks and park buildings, well above current levels by allocating additional resources and funding. The current responsibilities of a single Superintendent are over extended and the responsibilities need to be separated. In order to do this, the City must consider dividing the

responsibilities of maintenance into two leadership positions: Parks Superintendent and Public Facilities Superintendent.

- The Department currently has detailed maintenance and inspection procedures in place that are used on a regularly basis. The problems identified with the procedures are in finding adequate time and resources to keep up with the documented needs.
- The current work order system in place and the communication behind it needs to be improved. The Information Management Division of the City is assisting maintenance personnel with finding an adequate system/software package to meet their needs.
- Construction contracts for work developed by consultants should place more responsibilities with the designer/consultant to perform contract administration and allow better use of staff resources.
- The following list of recommendations may assist in addressing current needs with the system in place:
  - A decision/communication flow chart process can be implemented to evaluate where inefficiencies are occurring.
  - Streamlining and matrixing of resources with other departments, such as public works, can be done with a maintenance software program that allows users to access the status of their work order.
  - A new work order system needs to address the time it should take to perform tasks and effective reporting of results. Time studies for meeting acceptable standards should be incorporated based on effective reporting by maintenance staff on work results.
  - A two-division maintenance system will allow time for individual care at park facilities. Proper communication can create opportunities for staff to be cross-trained to maximize use of resources, improve efficiency, and reduce costs.
  - Current reports need to be examined for their need and how often they're performed. Establish procedures for what happens to the information once it is developed.
  - Eliminating the number of reviews and signatures from the process will help make it more efficient. Staff training on the purposes of the reports can help in smoothing out the process in terms of determining priority for necessary reports.
  - Reports need to demonstrate effective management practices in place and do not have to be bulky or time consuming.
  - Flow charting will assist in training staff on how information is developed and what happens to it once it is passed on to appropriate parties. This will help staff to understand why they do the reports in the first place.

## ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The Action Plan Implementation is design to provide a framework or strategy for the City to follow the proposals and recommendations and enhance its parks and recreation system. Additionally, the Asheville Planning Department is conducting a citywide Greenway Master Plan. The Greenways Master Plan will provide detailed and specific recommendations, including costs, for developing trails within the planning area. Greenway recommendations within the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan are limited to identifying possible corridors for greenway development and do not include costs associated with land acquisition or greenway development.

### Capital Improvement Program

- The capital improvement program for the acquisition, development, and renovation of parks for the planning period was prepared with input from City staff and the planning committee team. All of the proposed costs are shown in 1998-dollar values. Table 6-1 shows the capital improvement program costs for the planning period divided into three funding intervals



starting in FY99/00 and ending FY15/16. The capital improvement program does not include costs associated with developing greenways. These costs will be forthcoming in a separate Greenways Master Plan being performed by the Asheville Planning Department.

- The Capital Improvement Program can be summarized into the following components:

Renovation/Maintenance Program	\$ 13,365,000
Land Acquisition Program	3,525,000
New Park Development Program	13,942,500
Special Use Facilities Development Program	26,482,500
<b>Total Capital Improvement Cost</b>	<b>\$ 57,315,000</b>

- This total figure equates to spending approximately an average of \$3,689,117 annually through the year 2015/16.
- Table 6-1.1 further defines the capital improvements program on an annual basis for the first and second funding period (FY99/00-FY10/11). The table reflects the implementation of significant renovation and maintenance projects for existing parks that includes:
  - Community Park Improvements–Restroom renovations and equipment replacements including play apparatus, lighting, and site furnishings.
  - Neighborhood Park Improvements–Play equipment replacements and general improvements.
  - Mini Park Improvements–Play equipment replacements and general improvements.
  - Recreation Center Improvements–Expansions and renovations.
  - Special Facility Improvements–Repairs and renovations to Pritchard Park, Riverside Cemetery, Richmond Hills, etc.
  - Recreation Center Equipment–Updating gym/exercise equipment at recreation centers.
  - Administrative Hardware and Equipment–Includes computer equipment for registration system and activity based cost tracking.
  - ADA–Compliance and equipment.

### Proposed Operations Budget

- The proposed operations budget includes cost for staff, operations, and general maintenance requirements similar to those that are currently being performed by the Department. The proposed operations budget has been projected for the Department in 1998 dollars without any allowance for inflation or development of greenways. Operation budgets from the past three fiscal years (FY) of the Department were studied in making the forecast for the planning period. The overall historical budgets are as follows:

Year	Total Operations Budget including Building Services and Contract Admin.	Per Capita Cost	Building Services (BS) & Contract Admin. (CA) Budget	BS/CA Percent of Budget (per capita)
FY 95/96	\$4,182,295	\$61.55	N/A	N/A
FY 96/97	\$4,703,062	\$68.82	\$461,361	9.81% (\$6.75)
FY 97/98	\$5,026,121	\$73.13	\$458,988	9.13% (\$6.68)

- To compare these figures to North Carolina cities of similar size requires subtracting the per capita cost for Building Services and City Contract Administration.
- The grand total cost for operations through the FY2015/16 is estimated to be \$143,508,757 or

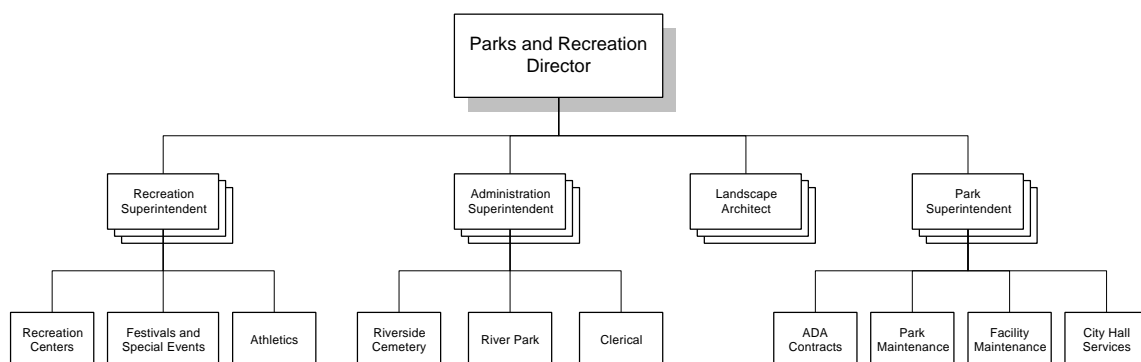
approximately \$8,441,692 per year throughout the planning period. Table 6-2 shows proposed annual operations budgets and projected per capita amounts to accommodate the operations of proposed master plan through FY2015/16. Revenues generated from the park system are not included in this analysis. The median per capita cost in the state of North Carolina for municipalities the size of Asheville was \$55.57 for FY96/97 compared to the adjusted rate of \$62.07 for the City.

## Staff Needs

The Master Plan requires a review of the existing organizational structure and how it relates to the implementation strategies. The recommendations have been developed through a careful analysis and critique of the existing structure and a management strategy centers on efficiency, communication, and strategic management.

- Efficiency with the use of existing Parks and Recreation resources. The resources include time, equipment, budgeted money, facilities, and work unit connectivity.
- Communication relating to organizational accountability and responsibility.
- Strategic Management in implementing the vision of the master plan against day to day operations.

## Existing Structure



- The proposed changes to the Department’s organizational structure illustrated in the following charts should not be considered “a final solution” to the Department’s organization, but a process of thinking in terms of maximizing results.
- The charts are an initial response to possible alignment of key positions (Superintendent of Recreation, Superintendent of Administration, Landscape Design, and Park Maintenance Superintendent) to improve communication, efficiency, and strategic management.

## Recommended New Organizational Structure

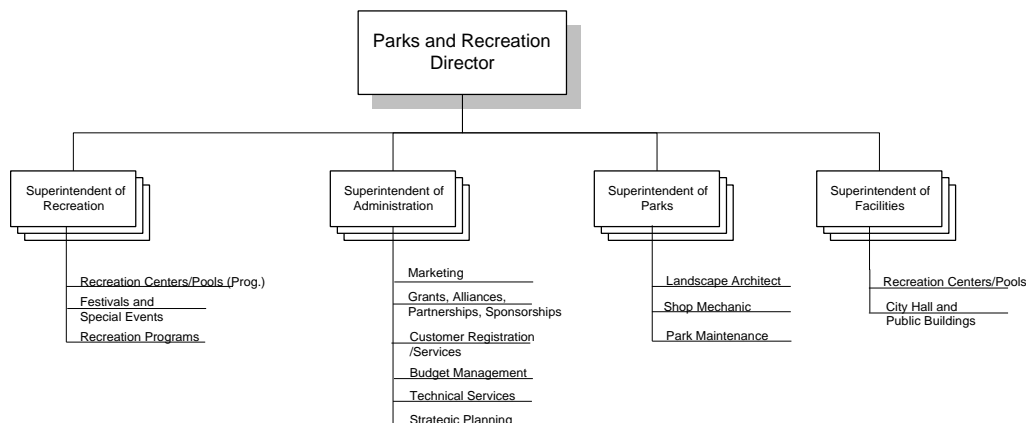
- The recommendations for a new organizational structure are being presented in two different concepts. One will be very traditional and functional. The other is very forward thinking and non-traditional, but practical in terms of design and efficiency.

### *The Traditional Model- Organizational Structure*

- The recommended traditional organizational structure allows the Director to spend critical time on strategic management in implementing the Master Plan. This allows him to focus on implementing the recommendations of the master plan and creating support in the community.

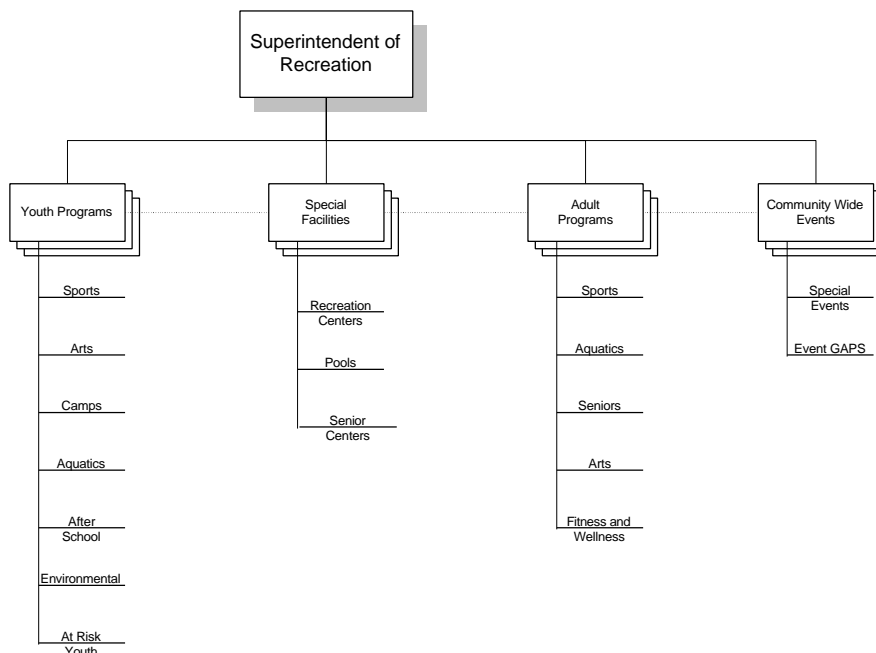
- The recommendation establishes four superintendent positions that provide greater accountability and responsibility to each other. This will allow each superintendent to develop their respective area of control by aligning like functions and units in one work area. This forces all resources to come together to support each other in meeting the needs of the community.
- The strength of the recommended structure is that the division makeup allows for better communication to exist based on the organization of working units. The keys to making it a success are focusing on communication, standards, and sharing.

### New Structure



### The Non-Traditional Model- Organizational Structure

- The second organizational structure suggested for Asheville Parks and Recreation Department is non-traditional only in design of the Recreation Division. The recommended changes in the first organizational chart (traditional model) for the Director, Superintendent of Administration, Superintendent of Parks, and Superintendent of Facility Services are the same.



- This second model recommends separating the Recreation Division into four separate areas. They include youth programs, adult programs, community-wide events, and special facilities.
- The separate sections or areas will focus on maximizing staff resources in specific demographic groups namely youth and adult programs. Each section focuses on developing demographic groups to share ideas, people, resources, and knowledge to serve that group.

## **Pricing Recommendations**

- The City of Asheville needs to update the pricing policies within the Department to accurately reflect the value of the services provided to the residents of the City.
- The City needs to establish an activity based costing model to track the true cost of all program services. This will help make informed decisions on whether some costs for a program should be passed onto the user because of the merit or private benefits the user receives. Additionally, the Department can make an informed decision to subsidize some program costs as part of policy within a Department revenue plan.
- The recommendations for pricing for Asheville Parks and Recreation services are the following:
  1. Over the next year, establish a costing program that evaluates direct and indirect cost for each aspect of program and park services.
  2. Once these cost have been identified evaluate the merit or private benefit if any that is being provided and determine at what level of public subsidy support the City wants to contribute for each activity reviewed.
  3. The City then can determine if they would like to find a sponsor or grant to support or bring down the cost of a program. If so, establish a strategy to seek out those opportunities through a formal request process.
  4. Depending on whether the City seeks to find outside private or public sources to fund a portion of the program, they will need to communicate to the users what percentage of monies the City is contributing to the experience and what level the outside sources are contributing. From this strategy the Department over time can make appropriate adjustments according to willingness to pay and market elasticity in the Asheville area.
  5. All new program services provided in the future should be priced at appropriate levels of public subsidy that is in tune with the City's value system for the program provided.

## **Earned Income Opportunities and Key Funding/Revenue Sources**

The Asheville Parks and Recreation Department has a long history of good public support for funding of parks, program services, and recreation facilities. However, the existing funding sources will not be able to keep up with the expanded operations and additional facilities unless additional dollars become available through a combination of sources. Earned income and funding sources are provided in the plan to help Asheville evaluate all their options.

## **Revenue Plan**

Upon adoption of the Master Plan, the City needs to continue with establishing a revenue plan. A revenue plan incorporates all available funding resources in a community, prioritizes them, and puts each option into a funding strategy. In a revenue plan the following funding

alternatives are evaluated for their appropriate use in funding capital improvements and programs.

- **General Tax Revenues** - General tax revenues traditionally provide the principle sources of funds for general operations and maintenance of a municipal recreation and park system.
- **Revenue Bonds** - Revenue bonds have become a popular funding method for financing high use specialty facilities like golf courses, aquatic centers, ice rinks, tennis centers, and athletic complexes for softball and soccer.
- **Parks Foundation** - Asheville has the opportunity to create a parks foundation to assist the City in acquiring land, developing facilities, sponsoring programs, and buying equipment for the Department.
- **General Foundations** - Foundation funds should be sought for both development and construction of facilities as well as providing programs. They should include general purpose foundations that have relatively few restrictions, special program foundations for specific activities, and corporate foundations with few limitations and typically from local sources.
- **Federal/State Assistance** - Federal funding sources necessary to help finance the Master Plan have historically been available from the U.S. Park Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Potential funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant Program is also available given certain conditions. Other potential sources for recreational funding can be found in Section 6.
- **Fees and Charges** - There are three different types of consumptive services provided by parks and recreation agencies that must be identified and priced accordingly. A public service is a service that has high public benefit (equal benefit to everyone) and should be free and supported by taxes. The second type of service is a merit service, which provides some public benefit. The person receiving the service benefits more than the general taxpayer and should pay an equitable share of the cost to provide the service. The third type of service is a private benefit service. This type of service benefits the user totally, not the general taxpayer. Therefore, the user should pay the total cost of providing the service.
- **Resident/Non-Resident Fees** - A philosophy of pricing activities based on the value and benefits to the participant is necessary to create equity for City and County residents. To develop a true partnership between the City and County, the philosophy of charging the same fee for any participant would demonstrate this equity and create a market value of the activity. A policy should be developed and adhered to consistently throughout the Department.

### **Master Plan Funding Strategy**

- Over the 17-year planning period, the City of Asheville will not be able to support the proposed capital improvements and operations budget of \$200,823,757 (in 1998 dollars) solely through the current level of contributions from the General Fund.(approximately \$11.81 million annually)
- The City must use a combination of revenue sources to accomplish the recommendations of the Master Plan.
- Please note that costs for greenway development have not been included within this funding strategy. The costs will be forthcoming in a separate Greenways Master Plan being overseen by the Asheville Planning Department

### General Fund

- Assuming allocations from the General Fund are increased by 5% above the current fiscal year (FY) 1997/98 level of \$73.13 per capita to \$76.80 per capita through the 17 year planning period, the total funds generated will be approximately \$94,996,608. This equates to 47.29% of the projected expenditures for the total budget (capital improvements and operations) or 66.20% of the total operations budget. (If the funding remained at the FY97/98 level it generates \$90,457,057.) To accomplish the Master Plan this funding strategy proposes to increase the current level of general fund contributions by 5% which equates to less than ½ % of the total City Budget for FY97/98.

### General Obligation Bonds

- General Obligation Bonds should be used in acquiring and developing new park and recreation facilities as well as renovating existing facilities. The funding strategy proposes three bond issues be targeted, ranging from approximately \$27.8, \$18.2 and \$11.2 million for the years of 1999, 2005, and 2011, respectively. The total of the three bond issues should be \$57,315,000, which represents 100% of the capital improvement program or 28.54% of the total budget (capital and operations).

### User Charges

- Currently, user charges are projected at \$770,583 for FY 1997/98, which is 15.33% of the overall budget. Assuming this level of funding continues through the 17-year planning period, it will generate approximately \$13,099,911 for implementing the Master Plan.
- A goal of the plan is to attain 18% of the total budget or \$36,148,276 from user charges. To accommodate this goal, revenue from user charges must increase 2.66% annually (15.33%+2.66%=18%) or generate an additional \$1.36 million annually, throughout the planning period.
- With renovations to existing facilities and new facilities on-line, this goal is achievable with extremely modest changes to the current fee structure for activities and programs.
- Within this strategy the proposed special use facilities would provide \$25,150,000 from user charges. This amount added to the projected revenue (\$13,099,911) generated by the current level of user charges over seventeen years equals \$38,249,991. This is more than necessary to attain the goal of 18% of the total budget (\$200.8 million).

### Partnerships, Grants, and Gifts

- A combination of partnerships, grants, gifts, or other revenue sources will need to offset the remaining 6.17% or \$12,393,873 of the total budget for the Master Plan. Over the 17-year planning period this amounts to \$729,051 per year.

### Summary of Funding Strategy

Funding Source	Percentage of Overall Budget	Amount	Average per Year
General Fund	47.29%	\$94,966,608	\$5,586,271
Bonds	28.54%	\$57,315,000	\$3,371,471
User Charges Revenue	18.00%	\$36,148,276	\$2,126,369
Partnerships, Grants, and Gifts	6.17%	\$12,393,873	\$ 729,051
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$200,823,757</b>	<b>\$11,813,162</b>

## Other Methods for Acquisition and Development

Other methods available to Asheville for acquiring and developing parks have been included in the Master Plan.

- **Fee Simple Purchase** - The outright purchase is perhaps the most widely used method of obtaining parkland though this method is the most difficult to reconcile with limited public resources.
- **Fee Simple with Lease-Back or Resale** - This technique of land acquisition enables the city to purchase land to either lease or sell to a prospective user with deed restrictions that would protect the land from abuse or development.
- **Long-Term Option** - A long-term option is frequently used when a particular piece of land is seen as having potential future value though it is not desired or affordable to the City at the time. Under the terms of a long-term option, the city agrees with the landowner on a selling price for the property and a time period over which the city has the right to exercise its option.
- **First Right of Purchase** - This approach to acquiring parkland eliminates the need for fixing the selling price of a parcel of land yet alerts the City of any impending purchase which might disrupt the parkland acquisition goals. The City would be notified that a purchase is pending and would have the right to purchase the property before it is sold to the party requesting the purchase.
- **Land Trust** - The role and responsibility of a Land Trust is to acquire parkland and open space while maintaining a well balanced system of park resources representing outstanding ecological, scenic, recreational, and historical features. A Land Trust is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit corporation made up of key knowledgeable leaders in Asheville who represent a cross section of recreation, historic, conservation, preservation, land development, and environment.
- **Local Gifts** - A significant and most often untapped source of providing funds for acquisition and development of local park projects is through a well organized local gifts program. The pursuit of land, money, construction funds, or donated labor can have a meaningful impact on the development of a well-rounded system.
- **Life Estate** - A life estate is a deferred gift. Under this plan, a donor retains use of his land during his lifetime and relinquishes title to such land upon his death. In return for this gift, the owner is usually relieved of the property tax burden on the donated land.
- **Easement** - The most common type of less-than-fee interest in land is an easement. Since property ownership may be envisioned as a bundle of rights, it is possible for the City to purchase any one or several of these rights. An easement seeks either to compensate the landholder for the right to use his land in some manor or to compensate him for the loss of one of his privileges to use the land.
- **Zoning/Subdivision Regulations/Mandatory Dedication**- Zoning ordinances, subdivision regulation, and mandatory dedications may be utilized to create new parkland at no cost to the community.